



Aston Fields Middle School

Striving for Excellence: Learning for Life

January 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

ONLINE SAFETY UPDATES

We are always striving to keep you informed and updated about online safety and the ways in which our children can be influenced by a range of media. We have been made aware of a Snapchat account that has been created entitled Horrid Henry and believe that this has been used to message pupils from middle and high schools locally. The content of the messages has been threatening, with the intent to harm and use of very unkind comments to young people. While we understand this account has been deleted and reported to the Police, we would advise you to check your child's phones to ensure this is not on their account.

Earlier this term we were grateful to PC Neil Sharpe from West Mercia Police who visited to deliver assemblies in school. He presented an assembly to Key Stage 2 about belonging to a community and the importance of using our phones and apps to communicate positively and keep themselves and others safe. Key Stage 3 was taught about how Hate Crime affects others and the importance of remembering to be kind.

Following these, we are attaching some helpful factsheets for you to read and use as an opportunity to talk with your child and remind them of the importance of using technology safely, kindly and respectfully. These are produced by National Online Safety who provide up-to-date advice about the rapidly changing online world. For more advice about how to keep your child safe online, please visit the Online Safety pages on the school website.

<https://www.astonfields.worcs.sch.uk/subjects/onlinesafety>

I am also grateful to a parent who informed me of a very useful website that has a number of relevant resources, tips and advice for parents and schools about keeping our children safe online. Social Jess is also able to be found on Facebook and Instagram, where she regularly updates with guides and advice on a range of online apps and topics. I would encourage you to explore what she provides.

<https://socialjess.com/>

Thank you for your support in keeping our children safe.

Kind regards,

Mrs H Mynott
Assistant Headteacher



ACE School of
CHARACTER

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SMARTPHONE SAFE

for young people

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You may have been lucky enough to have unwrapped a smartphone at Christmas, eagerly anticipating getting a new one at some point during this year. Whether it's a new phone or an upgrade on your old model, it's always useful to have a refresher about how to adjust the settings to keep yourself – and your valuable personal info – safe and secure. Here are some expert tips to help you enjoy your smartphone in the healthiest way possible.

NEVER SHARE YOUR PASSCODE




Alongside face or fingerprint recognition, your passcode is crucial to unlocking your phone and accessing your apps and personal information. You shouldn't give it out, even to close friends – after all, you wouldn't hand them a key to your house and let them go in for a nosy around! If a friend wants to use your phone, ask them why and make sure you can see what they're doing with it.

RESPECT PARENTAL CONTROLS



If you're allowed to have a smartphone, it's because your parents or carers feel that you're mature and responsible enough to use it safely. They might set controls and boundaries on your device – not to spoil your fun but to help you avoid hazards like too much screen time or costly in-app purchases. Following these rules means you can enjoy using your phone while respecting their wishes.

TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT



Whether it's to listen to music, play games, create content or chat with friends, using a smartphone should be fun. If you're ever feeling anxious, worried or scared about going on your phone, then something isn't right. It's important not to ignore these feelings; instead, talk to a trusted adult about what's happening and how it's making you feel.



What Children & Young People Need to

FREE VS SPEECH

HATE SPEECH

Everyone in the UK has the right of "freedom of expression". That's the right to voice your opinion with others. It's *not* the right to say whatever you want without regard for others' feelings and you must use this right properly: being respectful and inclusive to others. Whether online or offline, comments against groups or individuals (because of protected characteristics like race or religion)

Free speech is a person's legal right to share information, opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship or legal consequences. This freedom of expression is recognised in international human rights legislation, and here's what it does for us in our day-to-day lives ...

Hate speech refers to any speech or posting online – which is derogatory, demonising, identity-based insults, and count as hate speech. H

The Human Rights Act 1988 states that everyone has the right to express themselves freely – even if their views are unpopular and might offend others.

Freedom of expression encourages listening to others and allowing opposing views to be heard. It's important to respect someone's opinion, even if we disagree with it. Free speech lets us engage in meaningful discussions with people who feel differently.

Any concept could potentially offend someone. Galileo's ideas were incredibly offensive to many at the time, while not everyone agrees with Darwin's theory today. Freely exchanging ideas promotes progress.

Content that dehumanises those same attributes: they were animals, objects, non-human entities, fo

Free speech allows us to engage people we disagree with in a debate. The ability to challenge others' views is healthy – while having *ours* challenged helps us learn how to deal with criticism and think deeply about what we say and believe.

Claiming that specific groups are physically, mentally inferior, even that they are dangerous to others to view them

Free speech is a powerful tool for change, justice and reform. Many modern UK rights – such as women being allowed to vote or